

Week 6 Update

Although we are somewhat isolated out here, we have received (via satellite e-mail) several news reports and photos documenting the horrible events in the U.S. during the past week. The images we have seen seem like they can't possibly be real, and the staggering destruction and death toll is very difficult to grasp, particularly from so far at sea. Our thoughts and support are with all of you during this terrible time.

Below is our usual weekly update...

At the end of the last week we had finally succeeded in recapturing our friend 'Rocky' a third time to remove her tag, and we also deployed a new radio tag on our next focal dolphin. After that, it was time to head into port to replenish our supplies of fuel and food. Our ship can hold enough supplies for about a month at sea, and it has indeed already been one month since we left home. (Can you believe it?) Before heading in to our port call destination of Acapulco, Mexico, we moved three scientific team members to the tuna boat to continue partial set and sampling operations during our absence. Tuna vessels can stay at sea for much longer periods, so there was no need to have them leave the study area along with the research ship. Our goal was to have the tuna boat team recapture our new focal animal to retrieve the radio tag and collect at least minimal samples. We also wanted the 3-person team to deploy additional roto-tags on dolphins in the area, for future re-capture and sampling operations.

During our few days in Acapulco -- home of the famous (crazy?) cliff divers -- we relaxed a bit and obtained our needed supplies. We also said good-bye to several



participants and shipmates who could only join us for the first leg of the cruise, and welcomed our new team members to the project. After everything was taken care of, we headed back out to sea, into the stormy weather created by tropical storm Ivo. Our ride back to the study area was bumpy, and none of us got much sleep

along the way... On September 13, we arrived back in our study area and rendezvoused with the tuna vessel again. In our absence, the tuna boat team had been very busy, successfully recapturing our tagged dolphin as planned, and deploying 110 (!) roto tags during eight sets. Quite an accomplishment! Unfortunately, the seas were still a bit rough when we arrived, so we waited one more day before resuming set operations. The following day we tagged a new focal dolphin, and we are now ready to continue our study full steam. The seas are still calming down further, and we hope tomorrow will be a good day. Check back next week to find out how things go!